

Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA

§ 1466.8

(c) Establish State level EQIP performance goals based on national, regional, and State priorities.

(d) Ensure that national, State and local level information regarding program implementation such as resource priorities, eligible practices, ranking processes, payment schedules, fund allocation, and program achievements are made available to the public.

(e) Consult with other Federal agencies with the appropriate expertise and information when evaluating the considerations described in this section.

(f) Authorize the State Conservationist, with advice from the State Technical Committee and local working groups, to determine how funds will be used and how the program will be administered to achieve national priorities in each State.

(g) Utilize assessment, evaluation, and accountability procedures based on actual natural resource and environmental outcomes and results.

§ 1466.6 State allocation and management.

The State Conservationist will:

(a) Identify State priority resource concerns, with the advice of the State Technical Committee, which directly contribute toward meeting national priorities and measures, and will use NRCS's accountability system and other accountability tools to establish local level goals and treatment objectives;

(b) Identify, as appropriate and necessary, designated conservationists who are NRCS employees that are assigned the responsibility to administer EQIP in specific areas; and

(c) Use the following to determine how to manage EQIP and how to allocate funds within a State:

(1) The nature and extent of priority resource concerns at the State and local level;

(2) The availability of human resources, incentive programs, educational programs, and on-farm research programs from public, private, and Tribal sources, to assist with the activities related to the priority resource concerns;

(3) The existence of multi-county and/or multi-State collaborative ef-

forts to address regional priority resource concerns;

(4) Program performance and results;

(5) The degree of difficulty that producers face in complying with environmental laws; and

(6) The presence of additional priority resource concerns and specialized farming operations, including but not limited to, specialty crop producers, organic producers, and small-scale farms.

§ 1466.7 Outreach activities.

NRCS will establish program outreach activities at the national, State, and local levels in order to ensure that producers whose land has environmental problems and priority resource concerns are aware and informed that they may be eligible to apply for program assistance. Special outreach will be made to eligible producers with historically low participation rates, including but not restricted to, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, small-scale, or beginning farmers or ranchers, Indian Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders.

§ 1466.8 Program requirements.

(a) Program participation is voluntary. The applicant must develop an EQIP plan of operations for the agricultural or nonindustrial private forest land to be treated that serves as the basis for the EQIP contract. NRCS provides participants with technical assistance and payments to plan and apply needed conservation practices.

(b) To be eligible to participate in EQIP, an applicant must:

(1) Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions found at part 12 of this title;

(2) Have an interest in the agricultural operation as defined in part 1400 of this chapter;

(3) Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period;

(i) The Chief may determine that land administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Indian land, or other such circumstances provides sufficient assurance of control,

(ii) If the applicant is a tenant of the land involved in agricultural production or forestry management, the applicant shall provide the Chief with the

written concurrence of the landowner in order to apply a structural conservation practice,

(4) Submit an EQIP plan of operations or plan developed for the purposes of acquiring an air or water quality permit, provided these plans contain elements equivalent to those elements required by an EQIP plan of operations and are acceptable to the State Conservationist as being consistent with the purposes of the program;

(5) Supply information, as required by NRCS, to determine eligibility for the program, including but not limited to, information to verify the applicant's status as a limited resource, beginning farmer or rancher, and payment eligibility as established by part 1400 of this chapter; and

(6) Provide a list of all members of the legal entity and embedded entities along with members' tax identification numbers and percentage interest in the entity. Where applicable, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Pacific Islanders may use another unique identification number for each individual eligible for payment.

(c) Eligible land includes agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land, and other land on which agricultural products, livestock, or forest-related products are produced and resource concerns may be addressed. Other agricultural lands include cropped woodland, marshes, incidental areas included in the agricultural operation, and other types of agricultural land used for production of livestock. However, land may be considered for enrollment in EQIP only if NRCS determines that the land is:

(1) Privately owned land;

(2) Publicly owned land where:

(i) The land is a working component of the participant's agricultural and forestry operation, and

(ii) The participant has control of the land for the term of the contract, and

(iii) The conservation practices to be implemented on the public land are necessary and will contribute to an improvement in the identified resource concern; or

(3) Indian land.

(d) Sixty percent of available EQIP financial assistance will be targeted to

conservation practices related to livestock production, including practices on grazing lands and other lands directly attributable to livestock production, as measured at the national level.

(e) NRCS will establish a national target to set aside five percent of EQIP funds for socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers and an additional five percent of EQIP funds for beginning farmers or ranchers.

[68 FR 32348, May 30, 2003, as amended at 74 FR 25617, May 29, 2009]

§ 1466.9 EQIP plan of operations.

(a) All conservation practices in the EQIP plan of operations must be approved by NRCS and developed and carried out in accordance with the applicable NRCS technical guidance.

(b) The participant is responsible for implementing the EQIP plan of operations.

(c) The EQIP plan of operations must include:

(1) A description of the participant's specific conservation and environmental objectives to be achieved;

(2) To the extent practicable, the quantitative or qualitative goals for achieving the participant's conservation, natural resource, and environmental objectives;

(3) A description of one or more conservation practices in the conservation management system, including conservation planning, design, or installation activities, to be implemented to achieve the conservation and environmental objectives;

(4) A description of the schedule for implementing the conservation practices, including timing, sequence, operation, and maintenance; and

(5) Information that will enable evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan in achieving the environmental objectives.

(d) If an EQIP plan of operations includes an animal waste storage or treatment facility, the participant must agree to develop and implement a CNMP or demonstrate to the satisfaction of the designated conservationist that a CNMP has been implemented.

(e) If an EQIP plan of operations addresses forestland, the participant must develop and implement a forest management plan.